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AUTHOR D'Andrea, Michael
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ABSTRACT

As this country's first appointed "drug czar," William Bennett developed a set of proposals for a national campaign against drug abuse. These included: expanding the national prison capacity by 85 percent; providing additional fiscal support for states and local areas that adopt anti-drug laws; and increasing the availablility of programs designed to rehabilitate abusers. In many ways, however, these legalistic, punitive, and rehabilitative approaches constitute a repackaging of old policies that primarily focus on symptom reduction instead of problem cessation and, as such, this plan is inadequate. This article accordingly presents an alternative compilation of strategies, reflecting a comprehensive, developmental, systematic approach to the current drug crisis. These strategies include: strengthening the family; supporting students, teachers, and schools in the fight against drug abuse; preventive efforts among high-risk teenagers; enlisting industry in drug prevention; and restoring funding for community-based programs. It is contended that funding for these initiatives could be obtained by shifting $6 billion from the defense budget. Particular attention is directed to the role of mental health specialists, educators, and their professional organizations in providing the type of supportive leadership necessary to complement an effective "war against drugs" in the United States. References are included. (TE)

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Alternative Strategies to William Bennett's Plan for a National War on Drugs: A Comprehensive Systems Approach

By

Michael D'Andrea Ed.D.

University of Hawaii at Manoa

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The University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI. 48109-1259

Dr. D'Andrea was formerly the Research and Program Coordinator with the "I Have A Future Project". Currently, he is an Assistant Professor with the Department of Counselor Education at the University of Hawaii.

Correspondence regarding this manuscript may be forwarded to;

Dr. Michael D'Andrea
Dept. of Counselor Education
University of Hawaii at Manoa
Wist Hall Room 222
1776 University Avenue
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822
(808) 956-7904

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Abstract

As this country's first appointed Drug Czar, William Bennett has developed a set of proposals for a national campaign against drug abuse. In many ways, however, Mr. Bennett's plan is viewed as a repackaging of old policies that primarily focus on symptom reduction instead of problem cessation and, as such, considered inadequate. This article presents an alternative compilation of strategies, reflecting a comprehensive, developmental, systemic approach to the current drug crisis. Particular attention is directed to the role of mental health specialists, educators and their professional organizations in providing the type of supportive leadership necessary to compliment an effective "war against drugs" in the United States.

Alternative Strategies to William Bennett's Plan for a National War on Drugs: A Comprehensive, Systems Approach

Newly appointed Drug Czar, William Bennett, recently submitted a 234 page anti-drug plan to President Bush. This $6.1 billion plan reflects five months of research culminating in specific strategies aimed at reducing illicit drug use in the United States by 50% over a ten year period and 10% in the first two years of operation (Keen, 1989).

There are three primary cornerstones of Bennett's plan to combat the plague of national drug dealing and abuse. They include;

a). expanding prison capacity by 85% across the country resulting in increased spending for penal institutions by $580 to $1.2 billion

b). providing additional fiscal support for state/local areas that adopt tough anti-drug laws by $150 to $350 million

c). increasing the availability of programs designed to rehabilitate abusers by $481 to $740 million (Bennett, 1989).

While these strategies represent reasonable recommendations to deal with the current crisis, it is stressed that an overemphasis on legalistic, punitive and rehabilitative approaches offer a formula for failure in terms of achieving the intended goals.

From a historical perspective, such proposals are not new. Similar "law and order" policies were legislated during the Prohibition era of the 1920's and early 1930's. In retrospect, it is noted that the establishment of stricter laws prohibiting the sale and use of alcohol actually stimulated an intensification of illegal, underground activities with the unexpected emergence of a sophisticated system of organized crime and ultimately, the promulgation of alcohol use.

More recently, many government officials expressed their own favoritism for harsher legal policies for drug-related offenses. This sentiment was transformed into substantial fiscal support as expenditures for federal drug enforcement tripled from $806 million in 1981 to $2.5 billion in 1988. To the delight of those who lobbied for this funding, it was observed that a sixteen-fold increase in cocaine seizures (1.7 tons to 27.2 tons), a doubling of convictions by the Drug Enforcement Agency (from roughly 6,000 to 12,000), and record numbers of drug production laboratories were destroyed as well as thousands of marijuana plants eradicated during this same period of time (Dogoloff, 1989).

However, closer scrutiny of other drug-related indicators generate serious questions concerning the efficacy of the law enforcement policies mentioned above. In fact, it is reported that cocaine imports more than doubled since 1981, heroin imports rose slightly, and the overall market for marijuana remained relatively stable from 1981-1988 (Dogoloff, 1989). Based upon this documented analysis, it may accurately be summarized that emphasis on enforcement policies has not dramatically stimulated the type of reduction in drug sales and use United States policy makers had initially intended.

In light of these past failures, a report spearheaded by former Presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter, entitled "An American Agenda", outlines broader recommendations for a more effective approach in the fight against drug abuse (1989). Implicit in this report is the need for soliciting support from local human service providers, educators and their national/regional professional organizations in substantial and comprehensive ways to realize a successful national drug program.

Given the complex host of factors associated with drug abuse and the relative failure of past interventions, mental health and educational organizations are viewed as holding pivotal positions in terms of providing bold leadership to advocate for more effective approaches to this pressing dilemma. To date, such leadership has not been sufficiently visible in terms of articulating an alternative drug prevention proposal that integrates a systems approach within the context of an preventive, developmental model. What follows is a set

of propositions that represent such an alternative agenda to Mr. Bennett's plan to deal with America's drug crisis.

Differentiating Symptoms from Underlying Problems

Of notable import concerning the newest national drug prevention proposal are strategies which focus on the perpetrators of criminal action (i.e. drug dealers and those in possession of illegal substances) by expanding the availability of prison facilities, law enforcement personnel and rehabilitation services. It is asserted that, while such recommendations are indeed necessary given the current state of affairs, their purported importance reflect a narrowistic and emotional retaliation to substantially affect the current drug phenomena. In short, it is suggested that the proposals advanced by Mr. Bennett represent a redressing of old policies already proven to be ineffective.

In order to gain major headway in reducing the devastation of drug abuse, two basic tenants need acknowledgement. First, it must be recognized that contemporary society has effectively institutionalized illicit drug use in fashionable and economical terms. The mass media (i.e. television, movies, etc.) frequently portray drug consumption as a normative dimension of life which is generally accepted by a wide audience. This acceptance is manifested not only within such high risk populations as youth and economically underprivileged persons but, more alarming, by the escalation of drug use among many successful adults. The latter

point is underscored by dramatic increase of cocaine use in "white middle-class America" over the past twenty years.

This widespread demand provokes a market that has been subsidized by "white collar" financiers in search of quick and large scale profits from their investment. The impact of these white collar drug rings is only beginning to gain broad public attention as the violent reactions by the Columbian and Panamanian cartels against President Bush's anti-drug campaign have inadvertently exposed numerous domestic investors.

Second, careful attention must be placed on the repeated reference to the national "drug problem". This type of linguistical reference may, in fact, distort a more precise analysis of the real "problems" underlying drug misuse and simultaneously diminishes the formulation of effective policies aimed at stimulating more desirable ways of living. From a psychosocial perspective, it is more accurate to view drug abuse as the resulting "symptom" of other pervasive and potent underlying "problems" in adapting to life.

Like pleasure seeking children who pursue immediate gratification and a sense of personal security, many older persons ingest chemical agents to experience a form of anaesthesia that provides a temporary blunting of the psychic pain associated with the alienation, confusion and/or dissatisfaction inherent in many aspects of modern life. When this environmental-based motivation is coupled with a seemingly innate drive to experience pleasure

(Freud, 1961) and euphoria (Weil, 1986), the probability of widespread drug abuse is eminently magnified.

Of course, there are those who will immediately be turned off by such an interpretation, adhering to the belief that contemporary American society provides the vast majority of its citizens with the material conditions for personal satisfaction without necessitating the use of chemical inducements to attain a psychological "high". In this regard, reference is commonly made to reduced unemployment rates and a general decrease in the national inflation index to legitimize justification for the overall improvement in our country's "standard of living". However, it is suggested that there is a distinct difference between the "standard of living" associated with the economic and material well-being of a society and the "quality of life" which includes the spiritual and psychological vitality a citizenry experiences as a result of purposefully contributing to the collective promotion of human dignity within a prescribed culture.

Clearly, all is not well in our society. Painfully, the conditions of many of our infrastructure systems are deteriorating. One needs only to consider the rising rates and problems associated with divorce, child/domestic violence, youth dropping out of school, teenage pregnancies, crime, inadequate national healthcare, the warehousing of large numbers of senior citizens in nursing homes, the continuing toxification of our environment, the militarization of our economy, and the tremendous number of people involved in

alcohol/drug misuse and abuse to accept validation for this argument.

The magnitude of the present drug dilemma undoubtedly demands immediate and comprehensive action. Nonetheless, it is urged that ensuing action must be directed towards altering specific systemic conditions that fuel the perpetuation of the national drug plague rather than proposing strategies which, at best, are likely to provide superficial and temporary relief of observable symptoms.

Mr. Bennett's proposal is weighted heavily with recommendations that more accurately deal with symptom reduction by emphasizing the importance of imprisoning drug offenders and rehabilitating drug abusers. As such, they are viewed relatively impotent to achieve the intended result (i.e. promoting a drug-free America). Seriously wanting from his proposal is the type of informed and creative leadership required to counteract the current state of affairs. It is suggested that the type of leadership necessary to lead the nation out of the present crisis would, in the words of George Counts (1969), "dare to build a new social order" (p.3). This sort of structural change could begin by stimulating a transformation in many existing cultural values through an alteration in the material and psychological conditions of several of our basic infrastructure systems.

Promoting a Transformation of Values

We are living in an unprecedented age. Whether referred to as a shift to a technological age (Ellul, 1964), a postindustrial society (Cummings & Molloy, 1977) , or a third wave era (Toffler, 1980), our present environment is characterized by rapid change and paradigm shifts (Lucas, 1985). For many, this dramatic change in life conditions results in a psychological dislocation that creates new forms of personal disruption and confusion from what was once a more familiar, secure, and predictable way of living (Aubrey & D'Andrea, 1988).

Lagging behind this marked alteration in living conditions is an efficacious modernization of a cultural ethos primarily designed to facilitate the advancement of a more humanized society. Instead of witnessing a progressive evolution of social values that formulate a foundation from which a more just and sensitive civilization might thrive, the emergence of a more regressive collective ethos has been reported (Lasch, 1979).

As a result of this surfacing cultural ethos, people are frequently observed to seek satisfaction of a variety of decadent and narcissistic impulses. In a circular fashion, this increasing drive for self gratification is often reinforced by many dominant contemporary values (Lasch, 1979).

Numerous social critics have reported that this modern "weltanschauug" ultimately rouses feelings of personal alienation and dissatisfaction among the general citizenry (Fromm, 1955;

Keniston, 1965; Lasch, 1979). More important for the present discussion, this sort of cultural condition is identified as a major contributing factor to society's current drug crisis.

Given this cultural scenario, policy makers are urged to expand the purpose and purview of drug prevention proposals in ways that represent more realistic and workable approaches to an unprecedented national crisis. This extraordinary challenge will ultimately necessitate extensive support for those societal systems capable of stimulating a fundamental transformation in many of our existing social values.

Among the specific dominant values that warrant serious reexamination and alteration include those placing an inordinate emphasis on competition, individualism, a selfish profit motive, and the illogical import for continued military expansion to allegedly guarantee our national security (Washington, 1986). Transformation of these values into a new ethos, reflecting an adherence to cooperation, genuine respect for collective diversity, satisfaction of human needs before the advancement of monetary profits, and the promotion of more civilized approaches to conflict resolution, are viewed as holding greater promise for creating a more civil and sober society than do the punitive measures endorsed by Mr. Bennett.

Proposals for Social Progress and the Reduction of Drug Abuse: A Systems Approach

From a mental health perspective, a more substantial and comprehensive plan is needed to administer an effective national drug abuse prevention program than the proposal articulated by Mr. Bennett. Such a plan must be comprised of specific strategies that, first and foremost, reflect a framework from which a new trend in social progress may be realized. Ultimately, these strategies will necessitate the promotion of the moral and psychological development of our citizenry. This sort of development can be achieved, in large part, through intentional and systematic support for those social institutions that most significantly and continuously impact people's lives (i.e. their families, schools, workplaces, and various community agencies).

In the past, this recommendation might have been written off as being too abstract and/or viewed as a liberal "pie in the sky" suggestion for dealing with a nation-wide drug crisis. However, advancements in our understanding of the dynamics of human systems and an increased appreciation of the benefits of psychoeducational programs in promoting human development challenge policy makers to expand their vision by considering such interventions as important tactics in a war against drugs.

Instead of implementing a battle plan that focuses on rehabilitating and punishing members of urban youth gangs, who are frequently targeted as a primary cause of drug abuse in the United States, it is suggested that greater success would be attained by directing

intensified attention on those social systems that are naturally positioned to shape an anti-drug disposition among the general population. In this respect, given the acknowledged role mental health professionals and educators play in enhancing the healthy development of millions of people across the country, they undoubtedly have a legitimate right and professional responsibility to lobby for programs that support America's families, schools, employment places and community agencies as necessary components in a comprehensive campaign against drugs.

Strengthening the Lifeline of Society: The Family

Presently, a majority of the children in America grow up in families where both parents are employed (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1988). This phenomenon represents the real economic necessity of contemporary life rather than a casual choice by heads-of-households. Oftentimes, this sociological reality results in family systems where mothers and fathers have less time and energy to provide the type of guidance, emotional support, and healthy discipline necessary to nurture optimal child development. Such familial conditions potentially contribute to a deterioration in the capacity of our most basic societal system to promote a sense of personal security, validation, and purposefulness among many children during their formative years.

In view of this phenomenon, a comprehensive drug prevention program would do well to include monetary support for maternal

and/or paternal leave from employment for those working parents who experience a new addition to their family. This strategy is intended to serve a twofold purpose. First, it concretely demonstrates support for the important role parents play in enabling their children to become healthy, sober and active contributors within their own families and society at large.

Second, it provides greater opportunity for mothers and fathers to establish a constructive bond with their children during this critical developmental stage (Goldberg, 1979; Klaus & Kennell, 1976). In doing so, children are more likely to develop positive attitudes towards themselves as their sense of security and self-worth increases. Furthermore, such early established attitudes often furnish a basis from which more complex dispositions concerning one's personal health and well-being mature later in life.

Inevitably, an effective national drug prevention plan must go far beyond providing support to new parents following the birth of their children. As research clearly indicates, experiences during the early childhood years affect personality development in many significant ways (Elkind, 1981; Erikson, 1963; Selman, 1981). Recent interest in the various psychosocial conditions present during one's childhood that appear to contribute to the formation of an "addictive personality" (Nakken, 1988) further underscores the importance of early preventive interventions. In addition, the success of Headstart Programs over the past twenty years provides

empirical verification of the value of such programs to promote the intellectual and personal development of young children (Hodges & Cooper, 1981; Horowitz & Paden, 1973).

In view of these findings, it makes inevitable sense to include financial provisions for working parents in need of securing quality preschool services for their children as another important component of a serous national drug prevention proposal. Admittedly, such early prevention programs do not guarantee that all children participating in them will become healthy, productive and sober adults. They are, however, viewed as a vital part of a comprehensive "package" of proposals aimed at altering the existing cultural landscape which has become fertile terrain for drug use among an increasingly younger audience.

To their credit, many preschool programs sustain and amplify parental efforts to instill a sense of self-worth, responsibility and cooperation among young children. Sensitive to the preventive and developmental value of these programs, it is noted that most Americans prefer government spending for child-care at the front end of life rather than paying for jail-care, welfare and rehabilitative care at the back end of life (Jackson, 1987).

These recommendations are considered to be important and necessary components of a comprehensive substance abuse prevention program as they intentionally support families to assist our youngest "citizens" to develop healthy psychosocial attitudes

and behaviors early in life (Erikson,1963). Unfortunately, such considerations are sorely lacking in Mr. Bennett's set of policies.

Supporting Students, Teachers and Schools in the Fight Against Drug Abuse

Coupled with the reality of the large number of dual working parents is the dramatic increase in the number of single parent-headed households in the United States (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1988). For better or worse, these family systems depend on our schools to play a more significant role in transmitting positive cultural values and stimulating the acquisition of a wide range of basic life skills with their children.

Few would argue, however, that existing classrooms are too crowded, school personnel underpaid, and the typical elementary and secondary school curriculum is woefully inadequate to produce the type of critical thinking, conscientious, responsible and participative citizenry needed to survive the demands of a technological age. Accepting these realities forces serious re-evaluation of the wisdom underlying the substantial fiscal cutbacks for this country's educational systems. In fact, between 1965 and 1980 support for education decreased by 20% nationally (Boyer,1983). Furthermore, funding for schools between 1980 and 1984 is reported to have dropped each year (Odden, 1984).

In the spirit of articulating an effective, comprehensive drug abuse prevention plan, it is urged that a significant shift in financial support for education must be realized. It is recommended that an increase in educational funding for the purpose of complimenting a national drug program would wisely be utilized by stimulating a rapid reduction in the average size of classrooms, upgrading the status of educators, and guaranteeing meaningful reformation of existing curricula in our elementary and secondary schools. More specifically, serious consideration could be directed to expanding the role of guidance and counseling programs which have demonstrated success in promoting students' psychological and moral development (Enright, Colby, & McMullin, 1980; Miller-Tiedeman, 1980; Mosher & Sprinthall, 1971). Such empirically tested developmental interventions hold tremendous promise as prevention strategies to deter youth from misusing drugs and yet, have not received serious consideration by national policy-makers in the past.

Preventive Efforts Among a High Risk Group

Among those at particular high risk for drug misuse are our nation's teenagers. Soon, they will be awarded the prestige of full-fledged citizens. Bestowed with this new found status, they will be expected to participate actively and responsibly in community affairs. With this in mind, it is nothing less than a national disgrace that more than a quarter of America's teenagers will not graduate from high school this year. For many, this represents a

surrendering of opportunities to obtain the necessary postsecondary training to develop specific vocational/career/personal skills required in becoming productive members of a highly complex, rapidly changing technological society.

While numerous factors contribute to the current dropout rate, there is little dispute that once prematurely divorced from the opportunity and resources to develop specific academic, vocational and personal competencies in an educative environment, the probability of experiencing a generalized sense of devaluation and personal alienation increases. Over time, these psychological conditions are thought to significantly contribute to the adaptation of a myriad of destructive behaviors, including the incorporation of a drug abusing lifestyle as an alternative to the perception of failure, social exclusion and despair.

Given credence to this situation, it behoves policy makers to include broad-based incentives for youth who abstain from drug use by offering government funding to subsidize the expense of postsecondary education services upon successful completion of high school. Although Mr. Bennett's current proposal emphasizes the expansion of prisons as an implicit deterrence for drug abuse, less importance is directed towards providing substantial incentives for those "at-risk" adolescents who consciously refrain from drug use in order to secure educational opportunities which hopefully lead to a more fruitful future.

Both from an economic and educational perspective, Bennett's proposal can be construed as being unsound. For instance, it is has been noted that providing a full scholarship for a youth to attend a state university for four years will cost between $20,000-$24,000. In sharp contrast, a penitentiary "scholarship" to house the same individual convicted of a drug-related crime for four years will cost taxpayers between $120,000-$140,000 (Jackson, 1987). With this in mind, it is safe to say that even schools at their "worst" are better than jails at their "best" in fighting the war against drugs.

The Role of Industry in Drug Prevention

In the last ten years, professional counselors have made tremendous strives within America's industries. They have been charged with the task of providing a variety of services aimed at promoting human development in order to enhance productivity and job satisfaction (Lewis & Hayes, 1988). The Employee Assistance Program Movement is a manifestation of such efforts.

This industry-based movement represents another untapped potential in the most recent national drug prevention plan. Typically, these employment-based programs offer a variety of educational/counseling services that not only facilitate more effective job-related skills but also assist individuals to acquire other important life/personal/social competencies that enhance

workers' overall ability to lead productive and satisfying lives in and out of the workplace.

An awareness of this new, potent infrastructure system suggests that increased support for these types of programs would be a natural compliment to a large scale drug prevention proposal. The sheer numbers of persons affected by these programmatic services demand serious consideration for fiscal support to counteract the drug crisis in America especially among adult workers.

Financial assistance for this system of human services could immediately be utilized to:

a). expand the availability of Human Resource Development Training Programs at the postgraduate level to adequately prepare more qualified counselors interested in working within the industrial/business arena,

b). assist in the recruitment of Employee Assistance Program Professionals to provide educational, referral and counseling services to workers and their family members,

c). provide tax incentives for businesses that initiat programs designed to provide drug prevention services for employees and,

d). offer stipends for employees seeking professional rehabilitative services when substance abuse problems have been identified.

Giving New Life to Community-based Programs

Under the Reagan Administration, successful efforts were initiated to reduce federal spending for many state programs. During this era, numerous community-based projects providing a myriad of recreational, educational, vocational readiness, health, and cultural services, suffered either in terms of a serious reduction or total elimination. In light of the impact of this political action, an endorsement of the preceding recommendations would be incomplete without concretizing specific strategies aimed at revitalizing community-based programs.

Emphatic support for such intervention services is made for two reasons. First, the cumulative impact of community programs often adds to the efforts of families, schools and businesses to promote healthy attitudes and life skills necessary to prevent the misuse of drugs and/or alcohol. Second, the availability of local human service programs offer a unique "safety net" for many persons who, for whatever reasons, do not experience positive developmental outcomes from participating in the earlier mentioned systems.

For those persons who inherit unhealthy characteristics from dysfunctional families, lack of employment, ineffective schools, or

unresponsive communities, the possibility of experiencing personal successes are greatly diminished. Their life experiences are often further infected by being denied opportunities to develop important personal competencies to negotiate with their surroundings as productive citizens in a democratic society (Vontress, 1988). For many of these individuals, local human service systems represent the last hope to develop a new way of life.

Among those who typically benefit from community-sponsored programs include homeless, handicapped, elderly, displaced workers, foster children and retarded persons. Members of these groups represent hundreds of thousands of Americans. However, denied the opportunity to participate in an expansive system of community-based programs, many will simply fall through the cracks. Having their basic right to develop personal competencies and employment skills neglected, such persons become prime candidates for drug abuse out of a state of personal despondence and hopelessness.

Surprisingly absent from Mr. Bennett's plan is any semblance of the substantial import community programs play in contributing to a reduction of drug abuse in local neighborhoods. This omission further highlights the lack of comprehensiveness of his proposal and suggests another serious deficiency in its capacity to achieve the prescribed goals. For these reasons, it is suggested that a more effective national drug prevention proposal must include support for local initiatives aimed at empowering the most needy persons of

all ages by providing services that nurture the realization of their interpersonal, social, cognitive, vocational, physical, moral and civic development.

Where will the money come from?

An alternative proposal emphasizing a systems approach has been offered for consideration as a compliment to Mr. Bennett's plan. The numerous recommendations presented in this counter proposal, when combined with those prescribed by our national Drug Czar, are thought to hold greater promise of achieving a reduction of drug use by 10% in the first two years and 50% during the next decade. It is maintained that the potency of the counter proposal rests in a thoughtful approach to stimulate authentic systemic change in order to combat a crisis that presents a genuine threat to our national security. However, in accepting this revised proposal, it is estimated that America must be willing to allocate $12 billion dollars, (or twice as much money that is currently recommended), to oversee a successful national drug prevention campaign (Dogoloff, 1989).

Mr. Bennett (1989) is correct in saying an all out war on drugs must be declared in the United States if we are to successfully combat the current situation. Never before has this nation been confronted with an enemy that so insidiously destroys the lives of our youth and jeopardizes the future livelihood of society. Acceptance of the Drug Czar's recent set of recommendations would presumably result in a

complex shifting of funds from various governmental departments in order to finance the costs of his recommendations. With this in mind, it is suggested that implementation of the strategies outlined in this revised proposal could be achieved by shifting $6 billion from the current budget allocated for the Department of Defense to accommodate the additional expenditures.

The logic underlying this economic plan is threefold. First, given the real threat drug abuse poses to our nation's security, it is felt that the Department of Defense, like any other governmental agency, has a responsibility to support an acceptable national effort to defend the integrity and future well-being of the United States.

Second, an additional $6 billion bill of support from the Defense Department could mean the difference between success or failure in a meaningful war against drugs. While it would certainly require altering existing plans for military expenditures, it is not thought to endanger our country's overall capacity to defend itself against a foreign threat. In fact, the 1989 budget for the Defense Department exceeds $305 billion. Therefore, a $6 billion procurement from this agency for the war on drugs represents less than 2% of this its total funding base (U.S. News and World Report, 1989).

Third, popular support for a workable plan that would cleanse this country of the pervasive threat of drug abuse is great. Public sentiment is clearly attuned to the need of taking dramatic action. Once presented with a sensible and comprehensive plan of action

that is backed by sincere governmental commitment to exert a broad-based effort to eradicate drug abuse from our communities, little vocal resistance is expected to be raised against this sort of financial recommendation.

A Call to Action Among Counselors, Educators and Their Professional Organizations

In conclusion, it is emphasized that the success of a national drug abuse prevention program will require extensive support from persons of all walks of our society. Inherent in this support must be the felt presence and enthusiastic endorsement by mental health professionals and educators who have daily contact with millions of people nationwide. For reasons presented in the preceding discussion, it is asserted that this group of professionals are better positioned to have greater personal impact on the citizenry than a handful of high level government policy-makers.

Counselors, teachers, school administrators, and community healthcare providers represent a tremendous resource base who regularly impact on a variety of social systems in ways the enhance human development in immeasurable ways. Consequently, it is suggested that a well articulated, comprehensive drug prevention plan that is adequately funded and supported by mental health and educational organizations represents the best possibility for success in the present state of urgency.

Out of respect for its diverse membership, historical achievements in the fields of education and mental health, and organizational leadership, it is suggested that the Association for Counseling and Development can play a formidable role in providing the type of vision required to lead a national crusade against substance abuse. In this vain, the recommendations outlined in this paper are presented to the members of this professional organization for critical review and welcomed revision in order to support a continuing search for workable solutions to this pressing concern.

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